

REMARKS

Claims 1-21 are pending in this application.

Claim 1 and claims dependent thereon have been amended, without prejudice or disclaimer, to be directed to a laser engravable printing substrate comprising a photo-cured pattern-free product of the recited photosensitive resin composition. This subject matter was previously claimed in claim 14, and is supported by the present disclosure at, for example, page 11, lines 6-22, page 31, lines 16-22 and page 77, lines 12-21 of the specification. As will be described in detail below, the laser engravable printing substrate comprises a photosensitive resin composition that is cured without forming an image or pattern. The image is later formed on the photo-cured substrate by a laser engraving process.

Claim 3 has been amended to restore the limitations regarding alkyl group(s) that were erroneously deleted in the preliminary amendment. These limitations are supported in the specification at, for example, page 13, line 23 to page 15, line 2. Editorial changes have been made to claims 13, 14, and 20, and claim 14 has been amended to depend from claim 1. Claim 15 has been placed in independent form. Claims 16 and 19 have been amended to indicate that the cured photosensitive composition is pattern-free. Claim 19 also was amended to delete reference to a trademark. Claim 21 has been added directed to a method of producing a laser engravable printing substrate in accordance with the disclosure in the specification at, for example, page 11, lines 6-22; page 31, lines 16-22; and page 77, lines 12-21.

No new matter has been introduced by these amendments.

Turning now to the Office action mailed March 21, 2008, it indicates (Summary, Box 1) that it is responsive to the communication filed 26 January 2005, the filing date of

the PCT International Application. It does not refer to the preliminary amendment filed January 22, 2007. Please confirm that the preliminary amendment was received and considered in the examination that resulted in the March 21, 2008 Office action.

Claims 1-20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Ishizuka et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication US 2003/0224281 A1). The Office provided a detailed description of the manner of applying the teachings of Ishizuka et al. to the claims originally presented for examination. However, the present claims have been amended to more clearly point out what applicants regard as their invention, and to more clearly distinguish over the prior art.

Ishizuka et al. relates to a photosensitive planographic printing plate using a photosensitive composition. As described in paragraphs 0032, 0033, 0068, and 0158-0160, Ishizuka et al. uses a layer of photosensitive composition that is selectively exposed to a light image and then subjected to a developing step for the formation of the printing plate. In contrast to the present invention, Ishizuka et al. subjects the layer of photosensitive composition to a selective curing step in accordance with a light image that may be applied in a variety of ways - e.g., a mask film having an image or a laser (e.g., paragraph 0158). Ishizuka et al. does not form a photo-cured pattern-free product of a photosensitive resin composition that is required by all the pending claims.

After creating this latent image by exposure of the photosensitive composition to some type of light image or patterning information, Ishizuka et al. then develops the image by removing either the exposed portions (positive-type) or the portions not exposed (negative-type) depending on whether a positive working or negative working

system is used. See e.g., paragraph 0060 of Ishizuka et al. In contrast to each of these embodiments that requires a patterned exposure, the present invention requires that the photosensitive resin composition be photo-cured without creating a pattern in this exposure step. The pattern is later created by laser engraving in which the photo-cured material of the photosensitive resin composition is directly engraved by melting and decomposing the area irradiated with the laser.

Ishizuka et al. does not describe or suggest the laser engravable printing substrate of the present invention having a photo-cured pattern-free product of a photosensitive resin composition, nor does this publication provide any reason to alter the photolithographic technique described to create a laser engravable printing substrate. Accordingly, the rejections based on §§ 102 and 103 should be withdrawn.

Claims 12 and 14-20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ishizuka et al. This rejection appears to be embraced by the rejection above, but includes some additional comments with respect to certain claims. Accordingly, the comments and arguments presented above are incorporated herein by reference establishing that the teachings of Ishizuka et al. do not establish a prima facie case of unpatentability of claims 12 and 14-20. Accordingly, this rejection should be withdrawn.

In addition, it is emphasized that the substrate of Ishizuka et al. does not meet the limitations of claims 15-18 because the printing substrate of Ishizuka et al. is not photo-cured and pattern-free at the same time as required by these claims. Ishizuka et al. creates a pattern by exposure to a light image created by a mask or laser. These claims are not directed to an engraved printing substrate, but to a laser engravable

printing substrate on which patterns can be formed using a laser engraving process. The printing substrate and process of using them are both different and not obvious from the teachings of Ishizuka et al. Accordingly, this rejection should be withdrawn.

Prompt and favorable reconsideration is requested.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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